[i86i>

General-in-clilef. Why his mind should have undergone this change, it is not easy at first glance to see; for a movement in force on Manassas was almost certain to have the effect of inducing Johnston to abandon his river-batteries and concentrate his forces for battle. The fact probably was that the President, afraid, as he was, of the lower Chesapeake scheme, conceived the idea of ordering McClellan to undertake the reduction of the batteries on the Potomac prior to beginning any expedition down the Bay, in the hope that the Chesapeake scheme would from this or some other reason be abandoned. But in thus proceeding by indirect methods, Mr. Lincoln only involved himself in futile and useless suggestions, and embarrassed the performance of his military duty by the General-in-chief. Mr. Lincoln should have either approved or disapproved of the removal of the array;[1] his decision should, Imve been arrived at without unnecessary delay ; it should have been clearly and authoritatively announced; and it should have been adhered to after it hud been announced. Threats, whether express or implied, directed against an officer of the army on active duty, —such as are involved in the phrase—" the General-in-chief shall be responsible that it moves on that

day "—are in bad taste, wholly unnecessary, and exceedingly impolitic. Disobedience of orders can best be punished by relieving the officer from duty, or, in gross cases, by dismissing him from the service. A threat is unnecessary, because every officer knows what his duty is to liis superiors,, and what he may

[1] See the admirable criticisms of Swinton, 94,